

Sophie Habib Gorgi

Born in Cairo in 1922. The daughter of Habib Gorgi, a water colours painter and a pedagogue whose theories changed art education in Egypt, she was encouraged to join the Art institute, from which she graduated in 1946 and became an art teacher. In addition to her work in education, she was very active in social work and founded a club in a poor district in Cairo where children could play sports, learn art and acquire working skills. In 1948 Sophie married Ramses Wissa Wassef, whom had started his experiment in creative weaving in an old Cairo school in 1942.

She had her two daughters, Suzanne (1950) and Yoanna (1952).

The couple bought a piece of land in the Harrania village where they started the Art Centre. At the beginning Sophie was involved in the social and educational aspect of the centre and in 1969 she set up a canteen for the weavers where she taught them how to prepare healthy food for their children. After the sudden death of Ramses in 1974 she took charge of group of artist that Ramses had started. They are known as the first generation wool weavers.

In 1989 Sophie built a museum for the private tapestry collection which demonstrates the progress of the weavings since 1944 till today. The collection contains Ramses' work as well as her own.

Sophie is an accomplished water colours painter; her works have been exhibited in several art galleries in Cairo.

Sophie is an expert on natural vegetable dyes for wool.